Astronomical

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Astronomical

by Katarra

Summary

Truck driver Will suddenly finds himself with an armful of bloody omega named Hannibal, far too young and pretty to be hitchhiking in the middle of nowhere, and to Will's horror... fast approaching heat.

Notes

Written for the Hannigram A/B/O Library's first Big Bang. (Coincidentally, also *my* first big bang!) The absolutely lovely art is by my partner istillcantforgetyou!

See the end of the work for more notes

With a growled curse, Will stomped out of the run-down diner where he'd *hoped* to find a decent cup of coffee. He'd gotten his coffee all right - along with the rest of the pot all over his table and hand. In the aftermath, his uncoordinated waitress' frantic apologies had been more painful than the burn, so as quickly as he'd been able to, he made his escape, caffeine-less.

Will resigned himself to pulling over at the next rest stop and getting some *actual* sleep. It'd cost him precious hours, but it was that or risk falling asleep at the wheel.

Turning toward the parking lot, Will sighed and dug for his keys. He hadn't managed to take a single step before a shadow rushed out from around the corner of the building behind him, colliding hard against his side. Twin steel bands seemed to wrap around his middle instantly, binding him to a trembling pillar.

Whatever - whoever - had hit him was shockingly warm compared to the cool night air, burning him a second time tonight.

Without thinking about it, Will tried to free himself, but there was no use. He was well and truly stuck unless he wanted to hurt the person squeezing him like Will's internal organs were their own personal stress toys.

"Hey, buddy?" Will wheezed, tapping gently on the heaving shoulder shoved up against his collarbones. The arms tightened, pulling an uncomfortable grunt from Will.

"I'm giving you three seconds to let go before I get a lot less patient," he warned, his words ending in a small, rumbling growl. He wasn't too keen on hugs on a good day, even with people he *liked.*

He pushed again, his fingers slipping slightly on the person's jacket this time. It was… wet? Will squinted, but he couldn't make out the tacky substance in the dark, nor could he smell it over the musty, overflowing outdoor astray next to them.

Whatever it was, it stained his fingertips black. Oil, maybe?

The stranger shook against him, arms finally releasing their death-grip around Will's middle, but instead of putting any kind of respectable distance between them like Will expected, their hands grabbed fistfuls of Will's flannel shirt, keeping them pressed together. Held still by a surprisingly strong grip, he was a captive audience for when the stranger started speaking, leaning back far enough for Will to finally see their face.

Later, Will would be ashamed that he didn't listen to a single word, not at first, all his brain power unwillingly diverted to memorizing each individual feature of the man in front of him: exquisite cheekbones, soft-looking, mussed-up hair, shining eyes almost too dark to make out in the poor light, sharp teeth caught on plush lips in a snarl as Will was given a short, agitated shake…

Will blinked, clearing his throat in embarrassment. He tried to gently remove one of the hands grabbing him, but that only earned him a barking reprimand in… Will had no idea what language that was. Russian?

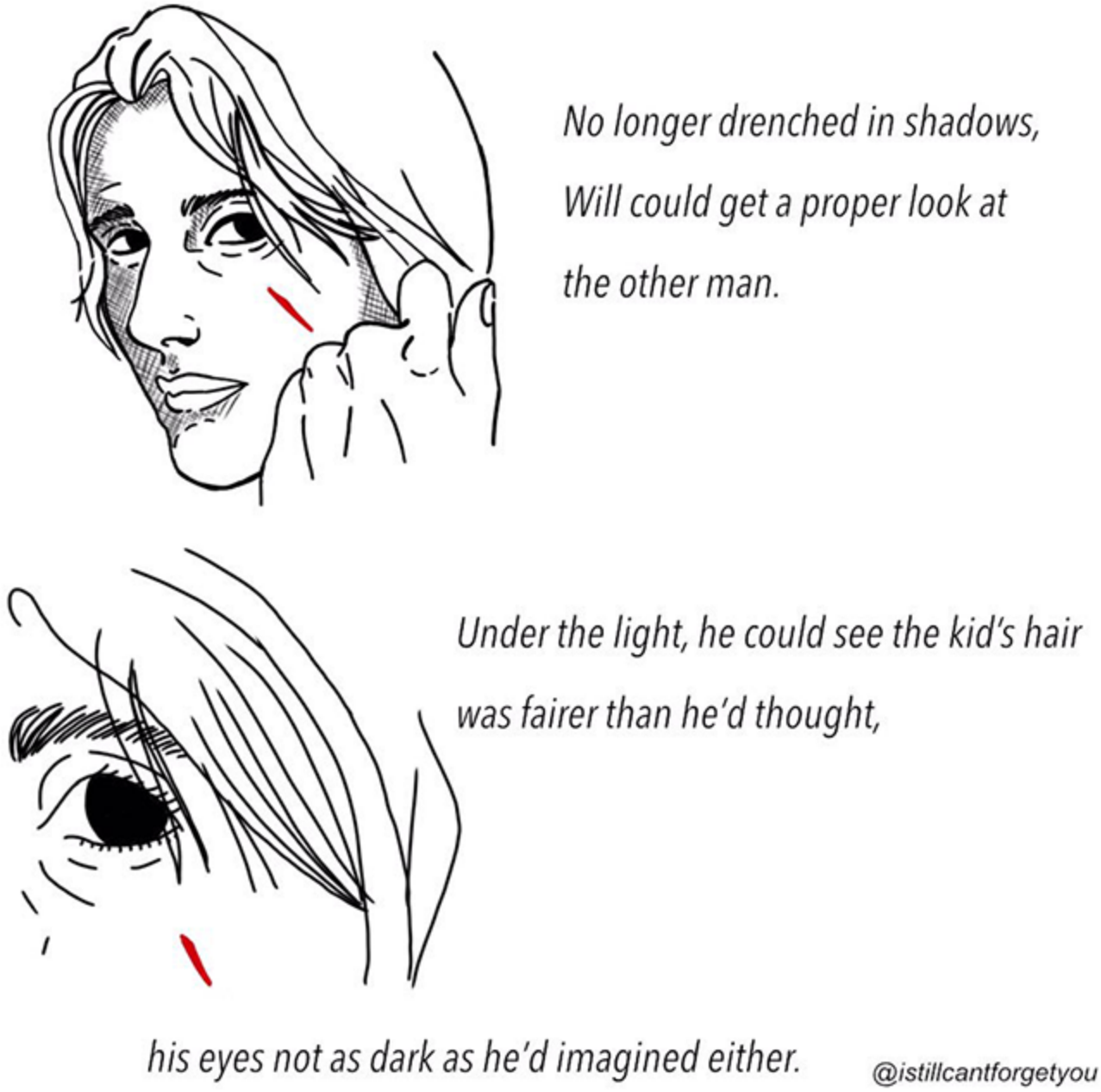
He was clearly frustrating the kid - God, now that he was paying more attention, his earlier appreciation made him feel like a dirty old man - as Will was given another shake before one of those hands let go of him to aggressively point at the parking lot.

“There’s… something wrong with your car?” Will asked, perhaps a touch too eager. If the reason the kid seemed so panicked was that he had found himself with a broken down rental in the middle of nowhere, Will could actually be useful.

The kid was pulling Will toward the lot, looking from the half-dozen scattered vehicles to Will and back again. Will let himself be led, figuring he’d be shown the troublesome car in question. Didn’t matter that his companion wouldn’t be able to explain what the problem was - he knew his way around most engines.

Except he hadn’t been led anywhere in particular, and the stranger stopped suddenly under a streetlamp, flustered and lost. Will took advantage of the pause to take a step away, putting some distance between them despite the reluctance the stranger had in letting go of his arm.

No longer in drenched shadows, Will could get a proper look at the other man. Under the light, he could see the kid’s hair was fairer than he’d thought, his eyes not as dark as he’d imagined either. And the stains… the stains were not oil at all.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@istillcantforgetyou

The car-trouble fantasy - where Will became a pretty young thing's savior after only a few minute's work under the hood - had been just that, a fantasy.

Properly lit, the stains weren't black but a deep, dark red that couldn't be anything other than blood, and away from the stinking cigarette bin, the copper in the air was unmistakable.

After the initial shock, a clawing panic surged up Will's throat, choking him as he stumbled forward. His hands searched the lithe body in front of him, looking for injury. "Are you *bleeding?* Are you okay? What happened?"

He was pushed away before he could investigate for long. The kid said something again, arms wrapped around himself, looking down. For the first time, Will could hear some small sniffles and shaky, stuttering breaths.

"Did someone hurt you?" he asked.

Will didn't get a verbal answer, but the kid turned away, biting his lip again and shivering.

He was cold; of course he was, Will realized. He was soaked through - some of the blood was even on the side of his face, staining his hair. He had to be *freezing*.

"Listen," Will said, aiming to keep his voice calm. Soothing. He looked around, instincts on edge knowing whoever had attacked this kid had to still be nearby. "Why don't we go inside where it's warm? The staff can help get you cleaned up, maybe something to eat? My treat. Come on, let's-"

Will's touch was rebuffed, and the kid took a wary step back, away from Will and the diner. Holding up his hands, Will smiled awkwardly in apology. "Sorry. I won't do that again. But-" he gestured with his thumb- "we should get you inside where it's safe. We can wait there for the police."

Will had to swallow down a small gasp when the kid's head snapped up, pinning him in place with an intense gaze. Red-hot revulsion at himself swirled low in Will's belly, alongside another kind of heat entirely. He thought his reaction would've been muted once he discovered the kid was covered in blood, but… Will was absolutely going to hell. At his age, he supposed it was a novelty to discover a new reason.

"No police," the kid said, eyes going wide and vulnerable.

*Oh, so he **did** speak English?* "What do you mean *no* police? Someone attacked you. We have to make a report, get you medical attention, and-"

It was less startling to be grabbed a second time, although this time the hands weren't clinging to his shirt so much as trying to dig into the flesh underneath.

"Please," he said, voice breathy and deep, the accent no more placeable to Will than the language had been. "No police."

Will sighed, making no effort to free himself, and slid his fingers under his glasses to rub at his eyes. "What do you expect me to do? I can't just ignore that you're hurt."

"Not seriously."

That tone, dismissive and strangely devoid of any fear, momentarily took Will back. "Not *seriously?* With all that blood?"

Unable to stop himself, Will reached out to lightly touch the side of the kid's head, where his hair was plastered stiff to his skill. Maybe it was all from a head wound? Will knew from experience that those bled like a burst pipe far longer than you'd expect. Didn't quite explain how so much had gotten onto his front, though…

"Please," the kid repeated. "Can you take me away from here?"

Will should say no. He should insist they stay, wait for police. They shouldn't give the attacker the chance to get away. Will should do the right thing.

He looked into those dark, shimmering eyes, at the streak of blood sweeping his cheek like an artistic brush stroke, and said, "Okay. I'll give you a ride."

The kid had looked intrigued when Will'd led him to his truck, quickly climbing up into the cab with a natural grace Will could never hope to replicate.

It was impossible to miss how avidly his new passenger watched the process of Will starting up his rig and pulling them out onto the road. Normally he'd chalk it up to mere idle curiosity… Except the kid didn't look so much curious as *studious.* Like he was committing the steps to memory.

During the next few minutes of silence, Will watched the kid out of the corner of his eye. He sat ramrod straight, knees pressed tightly together as he stared out the window, chin tucked against his shoulder and hands buried in his jacket's pockets.

"So…" Will started awkwardly, scrambling to find words to fill the void. He cleared his throat, just to stall for time. "I figure hospitals are as out of the question as cops?"

"Yes," answered a prim, flat voice.

Will wondered where that frightened, shaking thing he'd encountered in the parking lot had gone, only to be replaced with this still, composed creature when he wasn't looking. If it wasn't for the absolute need to keep his eyes on the road, he'd be unable to resist the temptation to watch the kid's every movement.

"Okay," Will conceded, licking his dry lips. He risked another glance before adding, "Well, *seriously* injured or not, you're still getting blood all over my cab. I usually try to avoid that. Behind you, right next to the- the bed there, is a small med kit. Should be some alcohol wipes in there, too."

Will hadn't made progress trying to get him to do *anything* for his own sake but implying he was being inconsiderate sure as hell did.

With a slight nod of his head, the kid turned in his seat to dig around the sleeper cab behind them. Will couldn't watch what he was doing, but he didn't miss the sudden intake of breath.

"What's wrong?"

After a pause, the kid said, "You have a dog."

"Yeah, that's Winston." Given the relative quiet, aside from the rumble of the truck and their own breathing, he was probably asleep and would stay that way. "Found him just wandering down the road back east, no collar or anything. He was hungry, dirty, and a little scared, I think. I'd meant to drop him off at a shelter once I got him cleaned up, but I dunno, after having him for a few days, I just couldn't let him go." Will bit his tongue before he could continue rambling and say anything more embarrassing than that. Like how keeping a creature that depended on him meant he took better care of himself. He actually stopped every couple of hours and stretched his legs. Not because he needed it, but Winston did. He slept (nearly) every night because if he crashed from exhaustion, Winston could die too.

"Besides," Will said, his mouth deciding to run away from him no matter what, "it's nice having someone to talk to during the day, even if they can't say anything back."

"In my experience, that would be a benefit, not a drawback."

After a small moment of surprise, Will barked a quiet laugh and adjusted to keep a better eye on both of his priorities. The road held nothing of interest at the moment, but the kid had returned to his seat, the first aid kit settled on his lap, and looked completely at ease.

Somehow, Will doubted his friendly and easy-going nature was the source of this newfound calm. The more miles they put between themselves and the diner, the more his passenger had relaxed, leaving Will to wonder what they'd left behind in that parking lot. What had sent him running?

"You wanna talk about what happened back there?"

The kid paused from wiping blood off his neck in methodical, precise movements. No frantic, disgusted scrubbing to be seen. "No."

"Are you sure? It might help to…" Help to *what?* Make him feel better? Be less afraid? The kid next to him couldn't even be described as *nervous* anymore, let alone frightened. Will'd say he was cool as a goddamn cucumber except… he wasn't, was he?

Despite the shivering, Will remembered how hot the kid had felt pressed against him. How his skin practically burned on contact. Will had assumed it was a trick of the environment, his brain getting signals mixed up between the warmth of another body and the chilly night.

But now that they were locked together in Will's truck, even from a few feet away, Will could feel the heat radiating off his companion in waves. He hadn't been sweaty out in the parking lot, had he? Maybe he had. Will hadn't been able to notice much besides the blood, which was gradually being cleared away.

The scent of copper eased, leaving behind a lingering sweetness that had Will's mouth unintentionally watering.

Oh fuck. Will's hands tightened on the steering wheel, eyes unseeing on the empty expanse of road ahead. Bad enough he'd picked up a stranger, some possibly-traumatized youth, one who wouldn't let Will take him anywhere safe to be looked after.

Because no, oh no, on top of that, Will just had to go and trap himself in an enclosed space with an unbonded omega, right on the cusp of a goddamn heat.

How had he not picked up on the warning signs before he allowed the kid to hitch a ride? The trembling and clinginess, the dark eyes - from *blown pupils* - the heat of his body, the sweat Will could clearly smell now… As Will took in shallow breaths, mouth pointed away from his passenger, he wondered when he became the kind of man who couldn't see the cursed forest for the trees.

He was so fucked.

"So you're okay?" Will asked after a few tense miles, voice nowhere near as steady as he'd like. "After all of… whatever went down?"

There was a quiet huff next to him. "I'm fine. And I still don't want to talk about it."

Understandable. Will breathed slowly, a pretty clear picture starting to form in his mind of what happened anyway.

Most of the blood hadn't been the kid's. Now that he'd cleaned up, there wasn't any fresh bleeding, leading Will to think he probably hadn't sustained any wounds in the first place. Will was strangely pleased - if a little unnerved - about that. The omega was a tough little thing to have held his own so well.

It was no wonder he hadn't wanted cops involved.

Will cleared his throat again, ignoring the way his heart pounded in his ears. He needed a distraction - they both did. "I'm Will, by the way. Don't think we ever got around to proper introductions."

Risking a sideways glance, Will noticed the way the kid fidgeted slightly before holding an elegant hand out.

"Thank you for your assistance, Will. I'm Hannibal."

"Well that's… unique," Will said, the only coherent response he could come up with when his fingers were wrapped in a scalding grip. He'd expected some kind of indignant defense - unique isn't exactly a *compliment* - but Hannibal said nothing and silently withdrew after a perfunctory shake.

Despite the fact his hand had started to sweat, Will regretted its loss. He thoughtlessly wiped his palm on his jeans, not realizing how that would look until it was done.

He'd be embarrassed at his own awkwardness, but did it honestly matter? If Hannibal tumbled headfirst into heat - which he sure as hell smelled like he was - what would anything matter in twenty minutes? Will knew he wasn't capable of keeping himself out of rut through sheer willpower alone. He'd tried.

Will tried to relax against the driver's side door, keeping Hannibal in his peripheral. He let his left hand fall down to rest between him and the door, fingers gripping the underside of the seat.

"So what brought you all the way out here? Didn't seem like you had anybody with you or a ride. How'd you get stranded?"

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Hannibal finally get fed up with his blood-soaked jacket and stripped it off, revealing smooth, tanned skin and a startling amount of chest hair for an omega peeking out from his damp v-neck tee.

He looked hot as hell - in more ways than one - so Will cranked up the truck's AC to provide them both some relief. It wasn't quite a cold shower, but it still managed to be a much needed icey shock to Will's senses.

The sudden movement had made Hannibal… not flinch, exactly. His small twitch reminded Will of a wary cat, jerking back from a perceived threat.

He recovered quickly. “I was not stranded,” he said with a small, pompous tilt of his chin, an action Will should not have found as cute as he did.

“What were you doing then?”

“I was between transportation when I… was in an altercation.”

Will’s brows furrowed as he concentrated on the road, turning the wording over in his head. He wasn’t going to ask about the clearly-off-limits *altercation* but… “Between transportation? What does…. Wait, were you *hitchhiking?* So close to your… You’re not a runaway, right? How old *are* you?”

Hannibal shot him a dark look that made Will shiver for reasons he couldn’t quite understand.

“Yes, I was - *am* - hitchhiking. And if you really must know, not that it’s any of your business, I’m twenty. Not some teenage runaway.”

Will was only slightly sickened by his own relieved sigh.

“Isn’t that really dangerous? I mean, what if I was some kinda… pervert or something?”

Hannibal shrugged, somehow looking delicate and dismissive all in one graceful gesture. He was more concerned with picking dirt - blood? - out from his nails than anything Will had to say. “I could ask you the same.”

“What?”

“How do you know *I’m* not dangerous? You let me into your truck with hardly any hesitation because you assumed I was harmless and needed your help.”

Didn't you? Will frowned, fingers drumming on the wheel. "It was the right thing to do. I couldn't just leave you there."

"And I appreciate that, truly. Anyway, I'm not worried. If you really had an ulterior motive, we're far enough from civilization now that you could've pulled over and had your way with me several times over."

"Yeah, well…" Will trailed off, mouth going bone-dry. His cab was never going to smell right again; the sweet scent of Hannibal's heat was going to be embedded in every strand of fabric forever, long after the omega would be gone.

Maybe there was somewhere he could turn around so he could drop Hannibal back off at the diner before it was too late. A driveway or a parking lot. *A field.*

After a few silent heartbeats, Will finally found his voice again and croaked, "Luckily I'm not that kind of guy."

"Hmm." The cloying, thick scent came closer, choking Will who had already been struggling to breathe through it. He did *not* jump when a hand was laid on his arm. "Pull over, Will."

"What? No, no I meant it. I can't - I don't do that. Let's just… let's go back to the diner. I'll call you a taxi."

“Do omegas hold no appeal for you, then?”

Will swore under his breath and searched the sides of the road for somewhere to turn his rig around. “I didn’t say that,” he snapped.

Hannibal leaned in, lips barely brushing Will’s ear as he said, “Pull over, Alpha.”

Will told himself that obeying the omega was just a safety precaution at this point. He could hardly think, and Hannibal seemed to be doing his damnedest to make Will drive them straight into a tree.

“Listen, we can’t - you should…” Will didn’t know how to explain, what he could say to make Hannibal come to his senses. He wasn’t at the wild stage yet; Will prayed he could still be reasoned with. “You need to go back. It’s not…”

“Proper?” Hannibal supplied, his silky voice somehow going even deeper and sending confusing tingles down Will’s spine. *“Safe?”* he added in a near hiss. “Were you not speaking in hypotheticals earlier, dear Will? Are you going to insist I repay your kindness with my body after all? Or did you have other depravities in mind?”

Desperate for distance, Will shoved at Hannibal, just hard enough to send him to the other side of the cab.

“Shut up,” he growled, chest heaving. He felt light-headed from all the pheromones swirling around them.

At least Hannibal stayed put. Huddled on the edge of his seat, jacket pulled over his lap like a shield, he suddenly looked small. It tore at Will’s heart to have been the cause, but offering comfort to something with less than four legs was something of a foreign concept to him.

While he restrained from reaching out, Will hesitantly said, “Sorry. I shouldn’t have done that, but it’s just not a good idea for us to be close right now. We’re going to head back to the diner, find out where the nearest heat center is, okay?”

Hannibal didn’t respond, staying curled up on his side of the cab, hands fidgeting under his jacket.

A shiver passed through Will. Maybe Hannibal was passed the realm of reason after all, which meant Will was nearly out of time. They weren’t far from the diner yet, and now that he didn’t have an omega whispering in his ear, he could think clearly enough to notice the rest stop sign ahead, where there’d be plenty of room to maneuver them around.

Will shifted in his seat to restart the truck, but a flurry of movement to his right made him freeze. Before he could register what happened, Will was swiftly pressed back against his seat, a solid weight landing in his lap.

“Shit,” he groaned, the air around him full of nothing but *Hannibal* now. One of his hands blindly flailed for the window, hoping to roll it down for some fresh air. His arm hadn’t gone

far when Hannibal adjusted on his new perch, confusingly moving to straddle closer to Will's knees.

"What are you do-" Will was cut off by suddenly being pinned back by his neck, Hannibal's large hand perfectly spanning his throat, and something sharp poking his ribs, angled right for his heart.

"I must admit," Hannibal said pleasantly, fingers tight but not squeezing, not yet. "You surprised me, Will. My hero, so eager to whisk me away to safety. Like all the others, I assumed it was a ploy to get me alone and at your mercy. Yet you've remained a gentleman despite how much I must entice you."

Against his better judgement, Will shrugged, the small gesture provoking Hannibal into tightening his grip. "What can I say," he gasped, panting heavily as he lowered his hands in submission to rest on his seat. "I guess my daddy must've raised me right."

He'd tried to, anyway. Not his fault Will wound up broken in the end anyway.

"A shockingly rare occurrence these days," Hannibal said with a small tap of his knife against Will's side. "The last alphas I ran into did not share your quality upbringing."

At least Will could be satisfied knowing *something* he'd assumed about the omega had been right. "Yeah? Not very gentlemanly, I take it?"

"Not at all. Had they simply left me alone, no harm would've come to them. Unfortunately, they did not heed my warnings."

"Well, that was rude of them," Will said mildly.

Hannibal's eyes widened slightly, the corner of his mouth twitching in what Will was sure would've been a smile had the omega not been committed to his Dangerous Killer schtick.

Not that Will didn't believe that's what he was, but he was certainly taking his time finishing Will off. Why?

"It was," Hannibal finally agreed with a strangely pleased lilt in his voice. "Even under normal circumstances, I have no tolerance for such behavior, but so close to my heat…"

"I get it. Everything's more intense with the vicious, animal part of you rising so close to the surface. It's all you can do to control it."

Squirming like he was uncomfortable, Will twitched his legs underneath Hannibal, jostling the omega enough for him to put more weight onto Will's throat, eyes glinting under the dim light of the cab. Hannibal drove the knife harder into Will's side, like Will needed to be reminded it was there. This time, skin broke, and Will hissed at the sudden sting.

"I don't *want* to control it," Hannibal snarled at him.

Will snapped right back, "Then why haven't you killed me yet?"

Hannibal glowered down at his own hand like it had betrayed him, the knife in it barely a millimeter into Will's skin, and his expression melted into confusion, as if he had no idea why he'd stopped.

To be fair, Will didn't know why *he* hesitated either, although he could admit to some perverse amusement at the little jolt he felt once Hannibal finally got an eyeful of the hunting knife Will had pressed up against his belly.

Rather than comment on the threat, Hannibal slowly dragged his gaze up to Will. "This is a first," Hannibal confessed with a hard shiver. "This far into my heat, I've never… I cannot be among others."

Huh. Will's alpha brain snagged on an implication there, and before he could stop it, he felt a small, pleased purr escape him.

Appalled - he had *never* made that noise before - Will cleared his throat awkwardly and said, "Well, if we're being honest, there's a reason I chose a profession that keeps me far away from other people, especially during my ruts. I usually spend them in a secluded cabin. Safer that way."

"Oh," Hannibal breathed, sagging slightly and bearing more of his weight on Will's legs.

Feeling a little strange at how the omega was looking at him, Will averted his eyes to stare out the windshield. "Better, y'know, to be alone than put down like a rabid dog. Violent, uncivilized alphas don't have any place in society."

"You're being remarkably civil now," Hannibal noted, letting his hand finally fall away from Will's throat. He made no move to get away from Will's knife - or remove his own.

"So are you," Will croaked, realizing with a start that his lap was steadily growing damp with slick beneath Hannibal.

The knife at his side moved, sliding around to his front. The back of Hannibal's hand brushed Will's, but instead of digging in and eviscerating him, the knife flicked upwards, snapping off the buttons of his flannel one by one.

Will offered no resistance when Hannibal slid the garment off of him, luxuriating the feeling of those refined, scalding hands running along his shoulders and down his arms.

"When I was a boy," Hannibal began, voice smooth and velvety as he tugged off Will's undershirt too, "my mother told me it used to be common for an omega in heat to be just as dangerous as a rutting alpha, rather than become the placid creatures they are now. It was nature's way of ensuring they were untouched until the right time, with only their true mate being able to be near them without the risk of being killed.

Will, dazed at first, simply nodded along, having heard the same stories from his grandmother. According to her, the trait had supposedly been bred out centuries ago. Couldn't risk, say, a king being murdered by his new, foreign bride during her first heat, after all.

But then Hannibal's implication registered, and Will's breath caught. "So… so you think…"

Hannibal smirked. "You said it was safer for others if you were isolated for your ruts, didn't you? How are you feeling now?"

Will licked his dry lips, his brain reduced to overheated mush. Hannibal had stripped off his own shirt and slid forward on Will's lap, bringing their bodies flush, skin on skin.

"Uhh…"

"How are you feeling, Will?" Hannibal urged, both their knives lost and forgotten.

Confused. Horny. Confusingly horny. Will let out a long breath, finding a small spark of bravery to raise his hands and lay them against the dip of Hannibal's trim waist.

Gently.

His heart was racing, every part of him pulled tight and eager, but the rage he'd fought so long when cursed with the violent madness of rut were… nonexistent. He felt at peace, like the beast that usually paced the cage of his ribs had been subdued at long last.

When he said as much to Hannibal, his answering smile, all fang and endearingly crooked teeth, made Will's stomach do a flip.

"Me too," Hannibal said with a soft sigh.

Will lifted shaking hands, running them along the hot, smooth flesh of Hannibal's side until he was cupping the omega's face between his palms, thumbs reverently tracing those cheekbones he'd so admired.

Hannibal was his. His *mate.*

Voice low, like if he spoke too loudly Hannibal would disappear from his arms, he whispered, "What were the odds we'd ever find each other?"

"Astronomical," Hannibal answered, leaning down to press a soft kiss to Will's mouth, the sweetness of the moment only marginally spoiled by the clicking of Will's belt being opened.

Maybe as an alpha Will should offer some token protest to his omega moving things along so quickly, but before long he could scarcely remember his own name let alone find the words to object once Hannibal finally took him up on that offer for a ride.

End Notes

Inspiration behind the fic:

Picked up a hitchhiker last night. He said thanks how do you know I'm not a serial killer? I replied the chances of two serial killers being in the same car are astronomical.

As always, massive thanks to my betas, Prose-by-Rose and anonymousEDward. ♥

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